

Jan. 31 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

ment of law applicable to the Air Force's operating location near Groom Lake except those provisions, if any, that would require the disclosure of classified information.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 31. The Presidential determination of September 29, 1995, was published in the *Federal Register* at 60 FR 52823.

## Remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast February 1, 1996

Thank you very much. Senator Bennett, Vice President and Mrs. Gore, Mr. Speaker, Senator Nunn, and Members of Congress who are here, and members of the Supreme Court, Joint Chiefs, other public officials, to our guests from around the world and my fellow Americans: Let me begin by saying that most of what I would like to have said on my best day was said better today by Sam Nunn. All during his speech I kept saying to myself, I'm gladder today that I prayed for him not to leave the Congress than I was the day I prayed for it. But I also know with a heart and a mind and a spirit like that, there is a great, powerful service still awaiting Senator Nunn in whatever he should decide to do.

I thank Sam Nunn and Alan Simpson and my neighbor Sonny Montgomery and all those who are here who are retiring from the United States Congress this year for the service that they have rendered to their constituents and to the American people.

I never hear it done here, but I think we all ought to give a warm round of applause to all these people who work their hearts out every year so that we can have this prayer breakfast, Doug Coe and all of his associates. I am grateful to them. [*Applause*]

And Hillary and I join all of you in praying for Billy Graham and for his wonderful wife, Ruth, and for their family.

I'm still glad to be here, even though I don't think I need to say much now. I know one thing: We've got a lot to pray about here in Washington. We've got a lot of conflict. We've got an abundance of cynicism. We have to worry about a loss of trust in our public institutions all across the country.

I disagree with Pete Geren. I think it was Harry Truman who said, "If you want a friend in Washington, you need to buy a dog." I think of what Benjamin Franklin said; he said, "Our enemies are our friends, for they show us our faults." Well, as someone who has had more of his faults shown, real and imagined, than anyone else, I think we all have a lot of friends here in Washington. [*Laughter*]

I was thinking last night about what we really want out of this prayer breakfast. And I was up late reading, and I came across something King David said in the Fourth Psalm. You know, David knew something about leadership and courage and human failing. He said in his psalm to God, "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress." "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress." So I pray that when we leave here today, by the words of Senator Nunn, the readings of the Scripture, the remarks of others, we shall all be enlarged in spirit, not only for our public work but for our private trials. I look out here, and I see friends of mine in both parties whom I know today have trials in their own families, in challenges of the heart they must face. And we leave here in the prayer that we will be enlarged.

Sam Nunn talked about the family and what Government cannot do. I ask that when we leave here we say a prayer for our families, to lift up those who are working hard to stay together and overcome the problems they face, to lift up those who are helping others to make and to build families. It is a rewarding thing to see the divorce rate leveling off and the teen pregnancy rate going down and the first indications that America may be coming back together around the values that made this a great nation. But we need to support those efforts. There

may not be much we can do here as lawmakers. Hillary said in her book that “til death do us part” has often become “til the going gets tough.” It may be that it ought to be a little harder to get a divorce where children are involved.

But whatever we do with the law, we know that ultimately this is an affair of the heart, an affair of the heart that has enormous economic and political and social implications for America but, most importantly, has moral implications because families are ordained by God as a way of giving children and their parents the chance to live up to the fullest of their God-given capacities. And when we save them and strengthen them, we overcome the notion that self-gratification is more important than our obligations to others, we overcome the notion that is so prevalent in our culture that life is just a series of responses to impulses and, instead, is a whole pattern with a fabric that should be pleasing to our God.

I applaud what Senator Nunn said about our children, for with them it is more true than in any other area of our life that it is in giving that we receive. I ask that we pray for those who are trying to make strong our communities and our Nation and our Nation’s connection to people of like minds and real needs around the world. For that, too, is a part of family life. We would be a better country if our communities and our country acted more like the best family, where we all played our part, including the Government, where we all did for ourselves and tried to help each other. Humanity’s impulse is to reach outward to the poor and homeless in need; to the striving who seek a hand up, not a handout; to the stricken from here to the Middle East, to Haiti, to Bosnia; to the Earth, which needs our help in preserving the temple God gave us.

Sometimes I think we forget in America how privileged we are to be looked to, to extend the bonds of family beyond our border. When Hillary and I were served breakfast here today, the gentleman who was serving us leaned over and he said, “Mr. President, I am so grateful for what the United States did in Haiti. I came here 30 years ago from Haiti, but it is still my country, and now it’s free.”

When I met the foreign dignitaries, I was going through the line and there standing was the mayor of Tuzla. For every American in uniform, he is now our mayor, and we are a part

of his family efforts to bring peace and freedom to all the people of Bosnia.

Galatians says, “Let everyone bear his own burden,” and then just a couple of verses later says, “Bear one another’s burdens.” Would God, through Saint Paul, have given us such contradictory advice? No, I don’t think so. I think being personally responsible and reaching out to others are the two sides of humanity’s coin. And we cannot live full lives, we cannot be enlarged, unless we do both.

So I ask all of you, beyond praying for our families, to pray for us here in Washington to make the right decisions about how we should enlarge and strengthen the family of our communities, our Nation, and our ties to the world.

Finally, I ask you to pray for us to have a more charitable attitude toward one another, leaders and citizens alike. I was aghast and deeply saddened yesterday when I read in one of the newspapers all of us read around here—probably when we shouldn’t some days—that a citizen of a State of this country had described one of his Representatives in Congress as a heathen, a Representative who is a genuine, true national hero. But I must say that the citizen would get a lot of ammunition for that just by watching the fights here.

What I want to say to all of you is that the disagreements we have had here in this last year have been very important and not just political and not just partisan. They have been part of the debate America must have as we move into a new era. But we need to conduct them with a great sense of humility. We need to show the right attitude toward those with whom we disagree, even when we feel wronged.

I received a letter a few days ago from a very devout Jew who is a good friend of the Vice President’s and mine, and he was talking about injustice. He said, in the matter of injustice, as awful as it is, it is always—always—better to endure it than to inflict it. We have to reach across these divisions.

In these 50 hours of budget discussions the Speaker and I had with the Vice President and Senator Dole and Senator Daschle and Mr. Gephardt and Mr. Armey, in some ways I wish all of you could have seen it, because they were remarkably free of cant and politics, and I learned a lot. I owe them a lot.

Believe it or not, we’re not supposed to talk about what happened, but two things that happened—there were two different occasions

where I found myself in the minority but in agreement with Mr. Arney, on two issues. And I thought to myself, I can't let this get out; he'll lose his leadership position. [Laughter]

Our friend Sonny Montgomery read that wonderful passage from Corinthians in his first reading. I would ask you to remember, all of you, how that passage is worded in the King James Bible: "Now we see through a glass darkly. Now I know in part." Every one of us is subject to error in judgment as a part of the human condition. And that is why the last chapter of that magnificent verse says, "Now abideth these three, faith, hope, and charity, and the greatest of these is charity." We need a charitable outlook in our feelings and our dealings toward those with whom we disagree, because we do not know as we are known by God.

So let us pray that our families will be stronger. Let us pray that the impulse of our families and those values will help us as leaders to make our communities, our Nation, and our work in the world stronger. Let us pray for a stronger sense of humility in our own efforts and a much

stronger sense of charity toward the efforts of others. Let us know always that the spirit of God is among us when we permit it to be.

When Hillary and I went to Ireland a few weeks ago and saw the yearning for peace there in the eyes of the Catholics and the Protestants, we had the honor to meet the Irish Nobel Prize-winning poet, Seamus Heaney, and I had the honor of quoting one of his wonderful lines, in hoping that I really was there at a time when, to use his words, "hope and history rhyme."

This can be such a time, I am convinced, only—only—if we are charitable, if we are family, and if we act according to the spirit of God. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:42 a.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to evangelist Billy Graham; Representative Pete Geren; and Mayor Selim Bslagic of Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

## Remarks Welcoming President Jacques Chirac of France February 1, 1996

President and Mrs. Chirac, members of the French delegation, to all the distinguished guests here, French and American alike, at the White House today: On behalf of the American people, it is my pleasure to welcome back to Washington the leader of a great nation and a great people, President Jacques Chirac.

Let me begin by saying that I know I speak for all Americans when I express our condolences to the people of France on the loss of our friend President Mitterrand, a leader and statesman whose half-century of public service made a vast contribution to France and to the world.

The friendship we celebrate today, the friendship we strengthen today, was forged in the very infancy of the United States. Two hundred and eighteen years ago this very week, our nations signed a treaty of alliance. Today, our partnership and the ideals at its core—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, *liberte*, *egalite*, *fraternite*—are making a difference to people

all around the world. From the Persian Gulf to Haiti, from Burundi to Bosnia—France and America, side by side, standing for democracy, for progress, and for peace.

France was America's very first ally. Today, after all these years, France remains among our best allies and best friends. Now, at the dawn of a bright new century, we must build on our legacy of leadership. To expand opportunity for people within our borders, our vision and our strength must extend beyond our borders. We must unite our people around the promise of peace, as our predecessors joined against the peril of war, and that is what we mean to do.

Together, we are raising the flag of an undivided Europe, where the language of democracy is spoken in every land. We are supporting the spread of strong market economies across the entire continent. We are transforming NATO to meet new challenges and opening its door to new members. And I welcome France's his-